

REMARKS

By the present paper, claim 2 is cancelled and claims 1 and 3, 4, 5, and 6 are amended. Claims 7 - 12 were withdrawn by the Examiner. Claims 1 and 3 - 6 are under examination.

Entry of the claim amendments and reconsideration of the Application are respectfully requested.

Amendments to the Drawings:

A replacement sheet is provided for figure 3. Replacement figure 3 include the legend reciting that the disclosed matter is admitted prior art.

The Claim Amendments:

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 2, now cancelled, that previously depended from claim 1. Other claims are amended as required by cancellation of claim 2. Applicants respectfully submit that support for the amendments is apparent and that the claim amendments do not introduce new matter into the Application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 1 - 3 were rejected as allegedly obvious over Rudloff, U.S. 3,848,296 in view of Drelich, U.S. 3,873,411. Because Rudloff, alone or in combination with Drelich, neither teaches nor suggests all of the elements of Applicants' claims, Applicants respectfully traverse.

Rudloff relates to separating strands of fibers from tow or yarn of a fabric. Rudloff does not relate to recycling of heavily contaminated filters (e.g. process filters). Anything removed in Rudloff is at best a minor amount of naturally occurring matter (e.g. seeds).

Drelich discloses a method of reusing fibers from fiber reinforced synthetic

resins. For example, when the synthetic resin is an acrylate, the resin is saponified and the saponification products removed to obtain recovered fibers. The recovered fibers are converted to *i.a.* nonwoven fabric. Drelich at 1:1-17.

As far as Applicants are aware, Drelich only teaches removing matrix resin from the fiber mat of the composite and neither teaches nor suggests a step of removing dust and debris from the isolated fiber and, therefor, does not teach or suggest this aspect of Applicants' invention, i.e., it does not teach or suggest the step of refining a used filter fabric.

The invention of the present claims is a refining process for converting nonwoven filter fabric having a large amount of adhered dust and includes a specific step and means for accomplishing the step.

Claim 4 was rejected as allegedly obvious over Rudloff in view of Drelich and further in view of Merk, U.S. 5,603,476. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Combination of Merk does not cure the defects noted above. The device of Merk is a skeleton coated with activated carbon. But this is separate from the filter body. In the invention of the present claims, a nonwoven fabric body is itself chemically processed.

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected as allegedly obvious over Rudloff in view of Drelich and further in view of Kruszewski, U.S. 6,010,785. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The invention of Kruszewski relates to a nonwoven fabric and felt comprised of a glass fiber, crimped glass fiber, and PTFE fiber. But the starting material of the present invention is after it has been used in Kruszewski.

Conclusion:

Based on the forgoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance, which allowance is earnestly solicited. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorneys.

Applicants respectfully submit that no fee is due with this paper. If in fact a fee is due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to debit Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

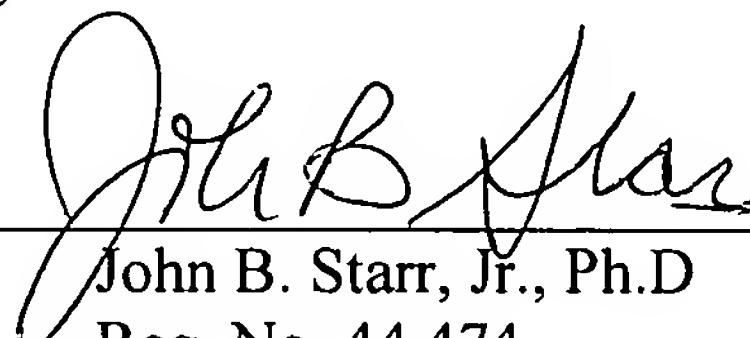
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Respectfully submitted,

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